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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the first session of the Committee

Follow-up to the first session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development: energy sector

Report of the Secretary-General

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* E/C.14/2000/1.

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I. Introduction

1. At its first session, in April 1999, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on follow-up to the first session of the Committee, for consideration by the Committee at its second session in 2000.[1] The Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1999, approved the provisional agenda and documentation for the second session of the Committee; the present report on follow-up activities in the energy sector has been prepared in response to that request.

II. Main decisions and recommendations of the Committee

2. At its first session, the Committee, following deliberations by its energy sub-group, adopted a decision to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council on its contribution to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the sectoral theme of which will be "Atmosphere/energy", while in the economic sector "Energy/transport" will be deliberated upon. In its contribution, the Committee identified the seven most critical issues that require urgent attention during the preparatory process, particularly by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and by the Commission. The Committee also discussed the different options for a sustainable energy future and identified six options that should have special attention. Also, the Committee considered different policies and measures that should be implemented to achieve a sustainable energy future.

3. The Committee also made recommendations concerning the outcomes of the ninth session of the Commission, *inter alia*, to create better understanding on and approaches to energy and sustainable development issues for the new millennium, recognize outstanding development issues and constraints to sustainable energy development and initiate a mechanism to promote commonly acceptable recommendations on best practices for achieving a sustainable energy future for all.

4. The Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council (a) bring forward the dates of the second session of the Committee to 14 to 25 August 2000 so that the Committee could continue to contribute usefully to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission and (b) approve the report of the Committee on its first session and the provisional agenda and documentation for the second session.[1]

III. Follow-up to the decisions of the Committee and related initiatives

5. At its seventh session, which was held from 19 to 30 April 1999 immediately after the first session of the Committee, the Commission on Sustainable Development recommended that the Economic and Social Council transmit the report of the Committee on its first session to the Commission at its eighth session, as well as to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development at its first session, as an input to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission.[2]

6. In its resolution 1999/276, the Council decided that the dates of the second session of the Committee should be brought forward as recommended by the Committee, after which the Committee would continue to meet biennially, with its third session to be held in 2002. In its resolution 1999/277, the Council took note of the report of the Committee on its first session and decided to transmit it to the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Council also approved the provisional agenda and documentation for the second session of the Committee and invited the United Nations Secretariat and other relevant organizations involved to incorporate, as far as possible, the reporting requirements for the Committee in their ongoing and planned work to support the Commission on Sustainable Development.

7. The Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Energy met on three occasions in 1999 and 2000 to elaborate on a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development that facilitates the coordination of activities in the preparation for the ninth session of the Commission. All United Nations entities and organizations involved in energy and energy-related issues have participated in the sessions

and, in addition to preparations for the ninth session of the Commission, the Task Force has coordinated work associated with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development. A matrix of activities has been prepared as a "living document" which is updated continuously as a reference for United Nations entities and agencies to aid in the coordination of activities. Reports of the sessions and the matrix are posted on the web site of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat at: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/iaenr.htm. Coordination of activities is reported in more detail in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of energy activities within the United Nations system (E/C.14/2000/6).

8. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development met for its first session from 6 to 10 March 2000. For the consideration at the Meeting, two reports of the Secretary-General were submitted, entitled "Energy and sustainable development: key issues" (E/CN.17/ESD/2000/3) and "National submissions" (E/CN.17/ESD/2000/2). In the preparation of the key issues paper, the contribution of the Committee to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was taken into careful consideration. The Secretary-General's report identified the following key issues for consideration by the Group of Experts: (a) accessibility of energy, (b) energy efficiency, (c) renewable energy, (d) advanced fossil fuel technologies, (e) nuclear energy technologies, (f) rural energy, (g) energy and transportation, (h) technology transfer, (i) capacity-building, (j) mobilization of financial resources and (k) international and regional cooperation. The Co-Chairpersons' summary of the discussion at the first session of the Group of Experts and the provisional agenda for the second session are contained in the report of the Group of Experts on its first session (E/CN.17/2000/12). Item 2 of the provisional agenda for the second session should be of major interest to the energy sub-group of the Committee; it reads as follows:

> 2. Consideration of the key issues of energy for sustainable development, with due consideration given for each issue to the means of implementation: capacity-building, technology transfer and financial resources:
>
> (a) Accessibility of energy;
>
> (b) Energy efficiency;
>
> (c) Renewable energy;
>
> (d) Advanced fossil fuel technologies;
>
> (e) Nuclear energy technologies;
>
> (f) Rural energy;
>
> (g) Energy-related issues in transportation.

9. The report of the Group of Experts on its first session was submitted to the Commission at its eighth session. The Commission noted with interest the critical issues in energy for sustainable development discussed in the report and urged countries to contribute to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission. The Commission adopted the draft provisional agenda for its ninth session, and a number of items of the draft agenda should provide direction to the work of the Committee at its second session, particularly the work of its energy sub-group, namely items 3 (Energy), 4 (Atmosphere) and 5 (Transport).

10. In the Secretary-General's report on the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/54/212), the relationship of the World Solar Programme to the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the international coordination and cooperation carried out under the World Solar Programme were outlined. The report also provided information on the implementation of the World Solar Programme, including projects established, activities carried out, those being planned and publications. In its resolution 54/215, the General Assembly took note with appreciation of the above-mentioned report on the World Solar Programme and, *inter alia*, decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the sub-item "Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005" under the item "Environment and sustainable development".

11. The World Energy Assessment a joint endeavour of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department of Economic and Social

Affairs and the World Energy Council, has progressed to the final stage of the editorial process. WEA provides a scientific evaluation and review of what is known about energy trends and their relationship to the world's future. It aims at providing an objective evaluation of the social, women, population, poverty, lifestyles, urbanization, economic, environmental (local, regional, and global) and security issues linked to energy, and identifying and assessing options for sustainability in each of these areas. WEA will serve as one of the inputs to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

12. During the editorial process of WEA, consultations were held at different levels, including regional dialogues (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Arab States, Europe), NGOs (environmental, consumer, advocacy groups), the scientific and technological community, financiers and private sector interests, and policy makers, as well as a South-South/North-South exchange. In addition to those consultations, a series of outreach activities and high-level regional meetings have been planned that are aimed at wider dissemination of the findings of WEA, thereby aiding the consensus-building process for sustainable energy strategies. Briefing notes and discussion papers based on the consultations and key findings of the editorial process are also envisaged as inputs to the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

13. Technical cooperation activities in energy — during the period between the first and second sessions of the Committee — addressed climate change issues on several fronts. The scope of cooperation included:

(a) Regional air pollution monitoring and modelling, introduction of cleaner fossil fuel combustion technologies and a clean cities initiative;

(b) Integrated resource planning and demand-side management to assist electric utility companies;

(c) Energy efficiency standards and labelling for end-use equipment and appliances, chlorofluorocarbon-free refrigerator programmes, energy audits and promotion of energy service companies;

(d) Renewable energy development, including capacity-building through training, supporting policies and frameworks for commercialization, entrepreneur development, standards and best practices, master plans and pilot projects, with a focus on energy services for rural areas and small island developing States;

(e) Energy recovery from solid waste, including landfill gas, solid waste management and environmental standards;

(f) A global initiative on transport energy with the World Bank, addressing transport energy planning, traffic management, road pricing, alternative fueled vehicles, emissions testing and mass transit.

IV. Conclusions

14. The recommendations of the Committee in the energy sector, particularly the contribution to the preparatory process for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, have had a tangible influence on activities in energy and related areas in the United Nations system. The critical issues raised by the Committee in achieving a sustainable energy future have been well received by the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh and eighth sessions, and the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development. Those critical issues were also taken into careful consideration in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Energy and sustainable development: key issues" (E/CN.17/ESD/2000/3), which was well received by the Group of Experts.

15. Consistent with the recommendation of the Committee, the critical role of accelerated development and the application of environmentally sound energy technologies to meet the growing demand for energy for sustainable development worldwide has gained increasing importance in debates and deliberations in all energy-related forums, as evidenced in the increased use of those technologies in the production, conversion and use of energy resources.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council 1999, Supplement No. 12*, E/1999/32.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 9*, E/1999/29.